

News Release



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New Trend for Memorial Day

Campers Staying Longer

California State Parks has noticed a new trend as the camping reservations pour in for the forthcoming Memorial Day weekend. People are reserving more nights, staying longer.

In past years, most people reserved just two nights, a Friday and Saturday, or Saturday and Sunday. This year, more people are staying longer by reserving three nights, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, apparently taking Friday off and going home Monday, making it a four-day holiday weekend.

Here are the figures that support this latest trend:

2007	19,701 nights reserved
2008	20,705 nights reserved
2009	25,036 nights reserved

California State Parks has about 15,000 total campsites, with about 11,000 on the reservation system. That amounts to 3 nights x 11,000, or 33,000 nights that can be reserved for the Memorial Day weekend. That means there's still room left in the system for more campers, but we would advise you to act quickly. The reservations begin to go fast as we count down the number of days to the first, big camping weekend of the summer.

Remember, there is a 48-hour reservation window, which means the last day you can book your reservation is this Wednesday, May 21, for arrival Friday, May 23.

So why is it happening? State Parks is not sure, because when people make their reservations, by phone or online, they are not questioned about the reasons behind their reservations. Do we have a wild guess about why it's happening? Yes. Our logic is that people may be forgoing the big and costly vacations and choosing something less expensive and closer to home. Since their state park stay is replacing a longer stay elsewhere, perhaps they've chosen to extend their state park visit a bit for a little more family fun. Again, there is no proof of that, just our gut feeling based on recent news reports on the economy, layoffs, hard times and vacation trends from around the nation.

(more)

Whether it's for a weekend or longer, camping at a California State Park campground has been called one of the best vacation deals around, with reasonable fees and plenty of picturesque scenery to enjoy. No matter where you live, there is bound to be a state park nearby just waiting to be discovered. Whether going just for the day staying overnight, visiting the outdoors can provide a welcome break from the pressures of everyday life.

The upcoming Memorial Day weekend is the traditional kick-off for the summer camping and recreation season, the time when hundreds of thousands of campers find their campsites and make themselves at home in the outdoors.

But they are the campers who made reservations in advance. As always, the most popular campgrounds on the reservation system fill up fast and early, those being the coastal campgrounds from the Sonoma Coast to Mexico.

People who have not yet made a reservation would be well advised to act quickly and follow the **Three Step Approach**:

Step 1. Check the campsite availability at
http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22687

The Web page offers a list of parks with available campsites for Memorial Day weekend – Friday, May 22, through Sunday, May 24, 2009. Parks on the list have availability for a one-day, two-day, or three-day stay. The page will be updated three times this week.

Step 2. Consider alternatives

Have a backup park in mind before you call or go online to make your reservation, just in case your chosen park is full.

Step 3. Make camping reservations at
(800) 444-PARK or
http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1023

Another alternative is to visit a park that does not require reservations. A list of first-come-first-served parks is available at http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22230

To get the most of your camping experience at California State Parks, plan ahead. You can make reservations up to seven months in advance through ReserveAmerica or online. To become more familiar with state parks, get a copy of the Park Visitor Welcome kit by calling (916) 653-6995 or writing to:

California State Parks Information Office
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

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